

Keeping Baby Healthy:

Diarrhea in babies younger than 12 months old

If your baby is younger than 3 months old, call your baby's nurse or doctor when diarrhea starts.

What is diarrhea?

Frequent watery, large bowel movements that:

- Might have a bad smell
- Might be a greenish color
- Might be mixed with mucus or blood
- Soak into the diaper or run down baby's leg.

Your baby might have four or more bowel movements than usual in a 24-hour period.

Baby could have a fever and/or vomiting too.

What to know:

- Your baby can get dehydrated very fast from diarrhea.
- Dehydration happens when your baby loses too much water from his or her body.
- Germs, food and some medicines can cause diarrhea.
- Babies can get diarrhea when other things make them feel bad, like a cold or earache.
- Drinking too much fruit juice or eating lots of fruits can make a baby have loose bowel movements. This might not be diarrhea!
- Babies have their own pattern of bowel movements. Think about what is normal for your baby if you think he or she might have diarrhea.
- Most diarrhea stops by itself in a few days.

What to do for feeding:

- Continue to breastfeed, if that is how you feed your baby.
- Feed your baby like usual. Babies who have diarrhea need food and liquid.

If your baby is 6 months or older and eats solid food, give your baby foods he or she already eats. Some good foods to give your baby are:

- pasta
- potatoes
- beans
- breads
- cooked cereal, like oatmeal or grits
- rice
- non-salty crackers
- well-cooked vegetables
- bananas.

What to do for diaper changing:

- **Wash your hands after you change your baby's diapers!**
- Wash and pat dry your baby's skin when you change his or her diapers.
- Put diaper cream or petroleum jelly on your baby's diaper area after it is clean.

What NOT to do:

- **Do not give your baby aspirin!**
- Do not give anti-diarrhea medicines to your baby unless your baby's nurse or doctor says to.
- Do not give your baby only clear liquids unless your baby's nurse or doctor says to.
- Do not give your baby fat-free milk, boiled milk, or honey.
- Do not feed your baby sweet liquids or foods like juices, soda, sweet tea, gelatin desserts or popsicles.
- Do not feed your baby spicy or fatty foods.
- Do not give your baby salty soups or crackers.

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Keeping Baby Healthy:

continued...

Diarrhea in babies younger than 12 months old

Call your baby's nurse or doctor if:

- Your baby is younger than 3 months old.
- Your baby starts to vomit.
- The diarrhea does not stop in 24 hours.
- Baby acts very sleepy or fussy.
- Baby has a fever of 101° Fahrenheit under his or her arm.
- Baby does not wet his or her diapers five times in 24 hours.
- Baby does not wet his or her diapers at least once in four hours.
- Baby's urine ("pee") is very dark in color and has a strong smell.
- Baby's soft spot on head is sunken.
- Baby is sick with other things, such as an earache or cold.
- Baby's mouth is dry and sticky.
- Baby has no tears when crying.
- Baby has blood or mucus in the bowel movement or the bowel movement is black.